

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on October 13, 2009 has been received and its contents carefully considered. Reconsideration of the final rejections presented therein is requested for at least the following reasons. Additionally attached to this Amendment is a Request for Continued Examination (RCE).

The specification has been amended editorially, and also to provide antecedent bases for the claim amendments. Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 1 is the independent claim, and claims 1-11 remain pending in the application. For at least the following reasons, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance.

The Office Action objects to drawings for informalities.

Fig. 6 has been amended to distinguish these features from similar elements shown in Figs. 1-5. It is thus submitted that the objection should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 5, 6 and 11 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Sekine (JP 2001-254755), and rejects claims 2-4 and 7-10 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sekine.

Claim 1 has been amended. It is submitted that the rejection is inapplicable to the amended claim.

AMENDMENT

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Amended claim 1 is directed to a universal joint yoke formed by press-forming a sheet, which includes a pair of tabs, each of which is formed of a flat plate extending in parallel to a predetermined axis, and has a first end portion, a second end portion, and an intermediate portion disposed between the first and second end portions. Each tab has a through hole formed in the second end portion by piercing for inserting a corresponding trunnion of a joint cross therethrough. The universal joint yoke also includes a coupling portion of an annular form enclosing the predetermined axis, and a cylindrical portion extending from the coupling portion. The cylindrical portion couples the first end portions of the pair of tabs in a U-shape, has a center axis extending along the predetermined axis, is united to a shaft, and includes a slit extending in an axial direction of the cylindrical portion. The universal joint yoke further includes a pair of relief recesses respectively formed on inside surfaces of the pair of tabs, and a columnar relief space defined by the pair of relief recesses between the pair of tabs. Each relief recess is disposed from the second end portions to the intermediate portions of a respective tab, and communicates with a corresponding through hole of a respective one of the tabs. The relief space has a center axis extending along the predetermined axis, and serves as a relief when the joint cross is introduced between the pair of tabs from a side of the second end portions. Each relief recess includes first and second sections communicating with the corresponding through hole interposed therebetween, with the first section being farther from the coupling portion than the second section from the

coupling portion, and being shorter than the second section along the predetermined axis.

The Examiner relies on *Sekine* as teaching the claimed invention. *Sekine* is related to a yoke of a lightweight universal joint. The Office Action seems to equate the arm portions 2 and 2' of *Sekine* to the pair of tabs in claim 1, equate the relief 13 of *Sekine* to the relief recesses in claim 1, and equate the bearing hole 6 of *Sekine* to the through hole in claim 1. However, *Sekine* fails to disclose, teach or suggest that each relief 13 includes first and second sections communicating with the corresponding through hole 6 interposed therebetween, with the first section that is farther from the coupling portion being shorter than the second section along the predetermined axis.

Therefore, *Sekine* does not disclose, teach or suggest all of the features recited in claim 1. Claim 1 thus cannot be anticipated or otherwise rendered obvious by *Sekine*.

Claims 2-11 ultimately depend from claim 1. Hence, they are patentable over *Sekine* for at least the reasons advanced above as to the patentability of claim 1. It is thus submitted that the rejections to claims 2-11 should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Based on the above, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and such a Notice earnestly is solicited.

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Should the Examiner feel that a conference would help to expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to contact the undersigned counsel to arrange for such an interview.

The amount of \$810.00 is attached as payment of the RCE, by way of credit card form PTO-2038. Should the remittance be accidentally missing or insufficient, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 18-0002, and is requested to advise us accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date

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